

Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal

Volume 2 | Number 1

Article 10

1-1-2013

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Recommended Citation

DelleBovi, Betsy Mary (2013) "Realizing the Jesuit Mission: Teaching Teachers in the 21st Century," *Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal*: Vol. 2 : No. 1 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://epublications.regis.edu/jhe/vol2/iss1/10>

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Realizing the Jesuit Mission: Teaching Teachers in the 21st Century

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Abstract

This article describes the relationship between professional development initiatives for teachers in underserved schools and the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm and Jesuit, Catholic mission and identity. It summarizes the goals, objectives, and outcomes of a one-year professional learning project at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY. The project involved education professors and graduate pre-service teachers offering mentorship and instruction in interdisciplinary learning to teachers in a neighboring Diocesan middle/intermediate school. An innovative model for professional development that provides alternative clinical experiences to pre-service graduate education students is described in detail. A literature review and theoretical framework that examines the connection between teacher training and mission is also provided. As well, perspectives on outreach projects in general are offered by Canisius Jesuit faculty, the College President and the contributing author of this article, an undergraduate English Education Honors student. Findings demonstrate positive outcomes and a strong need for university instruction in underserved schools and its role in carrying out the mission of Jesuit education.

Our economy continues to impact American schools' efforts to improve teaching and learning. Administrators seek small-scale, cost-effective professional development for their teachers. And our K-12 teachers, of course, continue to do more with less. Fewer spend their summers in training, be it university courses or other programs of study. They do not see the incentive, so they supplement their incomes with other employment, or they are simply exhausted from the unrealistic demands from September to June. Professional learning programs that are based on not-for-profit service is often the solution for many schools.

This article presents the relationship between Canisius College's Jesuit mission and a one-year pilot professional development project I implemented in an underserved urban Diocesan school in Buffalo, NY. Included are findings that demonstrate the effectiveness of this partnership and the participating teachers' attitudes and classroom practices. In addition, the article offers an original literature review and theoretical framework built around the *Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm* (IPP), a method of learning and teaching derived from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Perspectives on mission and identity from Jesuit faculty colleagues and our college

president are included in an effort to examine the relationship between that mission and professional development. Finally, I present a student's perspective—that of Jess Wright, a rising senior undergraduate English education major and member of our All College Honors Program at Canisius. Her contributions are included toward the conclusion of this article. Jess also served as a contributing researcher and writer for this article.

I teach in the School of Education and Human Services at Canisius where professional development and partnerships with local schools have become an integral part of our work. Professors implement clinical work in those schools to test hypotheses and collect data that demonstrate effective teaching and learning. Teachers in those schools benefit from this sort of professional interaction, so it certainly represents service on the part of faculty members. But such service is often less a priority than the need for data and resulting publications that lead to tenure and promotion, grant funding and other professional advancement.

In 2010 -2011, I had the opportunity to participate in the writing of our college's new mission statement and strategic goals at Canisius—drawing,

of course, on the fundamental principles of Jesuit higher education. Our mission is partly defined “intramurally”—how we can best serve our students. But it is “extramural,” too—how we can best serve the wider community. While involved with this work, I also began the professional development initiative - as part of my professional activity for the School of Education--discussed in this article. What I discovered was that the language generated by the initiative replicated the language of our mission and identity efforts. The bottom line is this: Professional development projects, such as the one I conducted, directly address the Jesuit Mission and Identity that Canisius has defined to help us shape our goals—intramural and extramural -- throughout the 21st Century. This article demonstrates this connection and offers data that demonstrate how effective these sorts of initiatives are—both in addressing Canisius’s goals and serving schools and the teachers—present and future.

In Jesuit education, serving the underserved is the benchmark for all learning. “The faculty’s research...not only obeys the canons of each discipline, but ultimately embraces human reality in order to help make the world a more fitting place for six billion of us to inhabit...university knowledge is valuable for its own sake and at the same time is knowledge that must ask itself, “For whom?” For what?”¹

Canisius College’s Mission and Identity

To understand how our mission relates so closely to this professional learning project, it is necessary to examine its substance. Titled “A Transformational Education: The Strategic Plan for Canisius College”, Canisius’s mission statement is published in a print-version brochure and is placed throughout our college’s website. It begins with a letter from the President and contains five sections/statements: (a) The statement of mission: “Canisius College, a Catholic and Jesuit university, offers outstanding undergraduate, graduate and professional programs distinguished by transformational learning experiences that engage students in the classroom and beyond. We foster in our students a commitment to excellence, service and leadership in a global society”; (b) four terms/phrases with accompanying definitions that

comprise the “Core of Our Mission” – *Catholic, Jesuit, Transformative Learning and Student Engagement and Leadership*; (c) a short statement titled “A Vision for the future”; (d) “Values Statement” and (e) “Goals, Objectives and Strategic Actions.”²

Michael F. Tunney, S. J., Professor of Fine Arts/Studio Arts and Director of Mission and Identity at Canisius, cites the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm as a practical tool for faculty to apply in classroom settings. He stresses Canisius’s ongoing initiatives to create student-focused, reflective, and applicable learning that result in rich experiences for both faculty and students. His definition of mission begins as a one-word response: “education,” in discipline-specific learning environments, in faith development, and in opportunities to apply one’s learning and faith in service to others, particularly those in great need among us. “A major goal of Jesuit education and Canisius’s own mission is our students’ faith and reason in engaging dialogues with the world.”

Canisius’s Board of Trustees approved the Mission Statement in 2011. Some of the language that caught my attention as I was developing the goals and objectives of my professional learning project included: “promote the deeper understanding...”, “invite active engagement...”, “the entire Canisius Community...”, “living our university’s Catholic, Jesuit educational mission.”³ These were among the concepts I wanted to embrace in the project. I used three goals from the Mission Statement to do so:

- (a) “Embrace our city by elevating synergies in its academic research and service programs to respond to the needs of our urban area to contribute to their development and advocate for their citizens”; (b) “Expand collaborations with local and regional partners by developing and implementing a comprehensive plan for the College’s involvement with the city school system and other area public, private and charter schools; and (c) “Develop effective collaboration with the ministries of the Catholic Diocese.”⁴

Literature Review: Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP) and its Relationship to Professional Learning for Teachers

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus describes the benefits of Ignatian pedagogy:

Ignatian pedagogy enables teachers to enrich the content and structure of what they are teaching. It gives teachers additional means of encouraging learner initiative. It allows teachers to expect more of students, to call upon them to take greater responsibility for and be more active in their own learning. It helps teachers to motivate learners by providing the occasion and rationale for them to relate what is being studied to their own world experiences.⁵

This is precisely the mission of professional development. Like teaching students, the uncomplicated goal in all professional development is to help people who need it and affect change. The simplicity and innocence of this concept gets lost, however, when it becomes mandated, required, a prerequisite or condition for employment, or a step toward promotion or pay increase. Coupled with this reality is today's corporate hold on professional learning companies that often masks this simple tenet. Enterprising minds have found great profit in "helping" school districts. We all know about the many companies that promise to deliver improved test scores in math and writing, for example.

University-based professional learning that echoes the Ignatian Pedagogical Principles accepts these pragmatic motivating factors by defining professional outreach as service to offer and duties to perform, owed to the underserved and to those wishing to advance their skills for the betterment of their students and their disciplines. Kolvenbach reminds us that in Jesuit learning, we can have it both ways:

"Originally founded to serve the educational and religious needs of poor immigrant populations, (Jesuit Institutions) have become highly sophisticated places of learning in the midst of global wealth, power and culture. The turn of the millennium finds them in all

their diversity; they are larger, better equipped, more complex and professional than ever before, and also more concerned about their Catholic, Jesuit identity."⁶

Ignacio Ellacuria, S.J., also views Catholic universities very practically: "...The university should be present intellectually, where it is needed: to provide science for those who have no science; to provide skills for the unskilled; to be a voice for those who do not possess the academic qualifications to promote and legitimize their rights."⁷

So how do the principles of Jesuit education, as framed in the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP) influence professional development in today's schools? The five components of the IPP – "context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation"⁸ – are embedded in all effective programs of learning. *Context:* It is essential that facilitators of professional learning have a thorough understanding of participants' worlds – both their teaching worlds and those outside factors that influence their work. *Experience:* Participants must be encouraged and allowed to draw from their past and present experiences. Facilitators must understand that all of us come to learning environments with significant experiential knowledge that can shape new knowledge. *Reflection:* A term used regularly in educational training, facilitators of professional development must engage participants in techniques of deep reflection, including the ability to use their imaginations and feelings to grasp essential meaning and value in instruction. *Action:* Teachers must be shown how to adopt new knowledge from professional development projects immediately into their current teaching practices. Effective facilitators address explicitly the importance of participants' newly acquired knowledge and skills as benefiting their students' academic progress. This, after all, is the goal of all professional development initiatives – to improve students' learning. *Evaluation:* Teachers must be encouraged and shown how to share their knowledge from professional learning experiences with others and become facilitators themselves for the betterment of their colleagues, schools and students.

A brief review of literature on the need for professional learning and effective elements of professional projects speaks to these five parts of the IPP. Snow-Gerono defines professional development school partnerships as opportunities for safe environments for teachers to collaborate in order to improve instruction. She refers to them as initiatives to make teachers feel more at ease with the demands of today's standards-based assessment, teacher evaluation processes and so much more.⁹ Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen and Bolhuis refer to professional development as "reciprocal peer coaching," a "configuration of activities that a dyad of teachers can undertake in the workplace with the intention of supporting each other's teaching."¹⁰ "Teacher inquiry"¹¹ and "collegial study groups"¹² are other titles used for professional teacher training. Whatever their names, they make up the language used to describe people helping people.

For teachers in underserved schools, and particularly diocesan schools, there is little support for professional and in-service training. Meanwhile, the present national initiative to evaluate teaching performance based on student achievement is daunting. The National Common Core Learning Standards (NCCLS) that are currently being implemented in private and public schools were created to address curricular inconsistencies across the 50 states and eliminate variation in levels of rigor that contribute to poor student performance. Although there is much speculation as to how they differ from previous standards and expectations, the NCCLS have emphasized the importance of professional development as a solution to poor teaching preparation and practice. Bolen, Davis and Rhodes, found that meaningful professional development directed at NCCLS instruction must be "content focused" and "needs-based." They encourage professional training that offers differentiated instruction and acceleration strategies to train teachers in implementing standards. They also recommend professional learning that addresses instructional practices in critical and creative thinking and development of problem solving skills through inquiry.¹³

The need for in-depth, content driven professional development is again realized by Hirsh who calls for subject-area expertise well

beyond basic content knowledge. She reports that teachers' basic intellectual abilities in their disciplines – those abilities often deemed acceptable in teacher certification programs – can no longer be considered adequate training. Especially for those teachers whose training and certification involved less rigorous expectations, effective professional development must now be a permanent avenue by which teachers not only meet the new Core Standards' expectations, but by which they receive energizing and informative support.¹⁴ Sawchuk concurs. "Teachers are already wrestling with an absence of truly aligned curricula and lessons. And added to those factors is concern that the Standards are pitched at a level that may require teachers themselves to function on a higher cognitive plane."¹⁵ Both the NCCLS and today's national teacher standards address this need for stronger performance. As stated in Standard 9(b), "Professional Learning and Ethical Practice" of the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, "Teachers will engage in meaningful and appropriate professional learning experiences aligned with their own needs and the needs of the learners, school, and system."¹⁶

Turning now to our professional learning project, I wanted to design the project for this discipline-specific instruction. Throughout the project—centered as it was on the perceived needs of in-service teachers in underserved schools - teachers spoke about the pressure to adapt their curricula and teaching strategies to meet the requirements of the NCCLS. They viewed the project as an opportunity to talk through their concerns and meet these challenges. It was in this acknowledgment and the consequent exchanges and partnership where the application to Jesuit learning was more than apparent. Those principles of human excellence, and care for the whole person, and service to humanity were what defined our work. Not only were we serving the participating teachers, we were guiding them to serve their current and future students – those future leaders of American and international societies.

Theoretical Framework for Professional Development as Defined by the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm

We sought out well-established theories of adult learning to drive our instruction. Of primary importance was a strong theoretical basis for collaborative, constructivist and active learning. These and all effective learning theories used to support educational researchers' and practitioners' work have some alignment to the five elements of the IPP. When we conceptualize learning, no matter what the motivating factors, we do so by considering what is best for the learner, how she will accept new knowledge and where it will be placed in her world.

In professional learning, we must remember that because adults are challenged in ways adolescents are not, instruction must be socially balanced. Teachers who instruct young children are more naturally viewed as leaders and authority figures. This is not the case in adult learning situations, even when facilitators are the experts delivering the instruction. Age theorists remind us that the older we become, the more reflective and informed our learning becomes. As adults, we are much more skeptical of how we use new knowledge (Trotter).¹⁷ Baxter Magolda and King report that "adult learning involves composing one's own reality in the context of one's relationships with others and the surrounding community. It is socially situated and requires reflection on past experience so as to re-construct one's place within a learning community."¹⁸ Professional learning initiatives must provide participants the opportunity to make connections between new learning and whatever prior knowledge and experiences they bring to it. This understanding is precisely what the IPP refers to in the elements of "reflection" and "experience". Marianne Gallagher and Peter Musso report that in Jesuit education, "it is the practice and process that bring a student to understand the value and meaning of the material presented, enable the student to recognize the place of the material within the whole of what is being learned and how it contributes or detracts from the pursuit of freedom and truth."¹⁹

Learning Partnerships Model

One way to blend new learning with prior experience in professional development is through what Baxter Magolda and King call the Learning Partnerships Model. Their 17-year longitudinal study of adult development included the finding that knowledge is "complex and socially constructed." They found that one's identity plays a central role in crafting knowledge claims, and knowledge is mutually constructed via the sharing of expertise and authority.²⁰ This theory of active and social learning relates directly to Dewey's theoretical claim that there is no such thing as genuine knowledge except as the "offspring of doing." "The analysis and arrangement of facts ... cannot be obtained purely mentally - just inside the head. Men have to *do* something to the things when they wish to find out something; they have to alter conditions."²¹

The Learning Partnerships Model encourages opportunities for collaborative activities in the process of constructing knowledge. Freire offers further support. "Knowledge is attained when people come together to exchange ideas, articulate their problems from their own perspectives and construct meanings that make sense to them. It is a process of inquiry and creation, an active and restless process that human beings undertake to make sense of themselves, the world and the relationship between the two."²²

Because professional development requires sustained collaboration between participants and facilitators, initial sessions should directly address the development of respectful and collegial relationships. Participants must feel trusted, respected and valued. Jones, J., Jones, K. Pickus & Ludwig defines successful professional development conditions as "a safe working environment that includes developing procedures for feedback, using protocols for productive dialogue and other norms to ensure respectful interaction."²³ This collaborative learning framework is precisely in line with the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises in the level of trust and respect for the retreatant and the context and realities from which they come to study.

Social theories of acquiring knowledge through interaction are further supported by Borko and Putnam:

The notion of distributed cognition suggests that when diverse groups of teachers with different types of knowledge and expertise come together in discourse communities, community members can draw upon and incorporate each other's expertise to create rich conversations and new insights into teaching and learning.²⁴

Social constructivist theory is embedded in the nature of any successful learning that involves interaction among adults. Creating a socially comfortable setting for our two participating teachers was very important to the success of the project. We wanted a partnership between two university professors and two middle school teachers to function as a merger of four professionals with one set of common goals. In this way, the role of professional development leader would be transcended to that of facilitator. Whereas a teacher gives a didactic lecture that covers the subject matter, a facilitator helps learners arrive at their own understanding of the content (DelleBovi).²⁵ Wertsch reports that in professional development, the responsibility for learning resides increasingly with the learner.²⁶ Effective professional development that involves outside consultants entering teachers' physical space must be based on this social theory.

It is important to note, however, that successful professional development cannot strictly be a social, collaborative activity in which learning occurs organically. Facilitators must provide appropriate scaffolding to foster the learning process. Borko and Putnam state, "Staff developers, like teachers, must negotiate their way between the learners' current thinking and the subject matter or content to be learned."²⁷ The idea that facilitators must "negotiate" between current knowledge and what is to be learned aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is the "range of tasks that a learner can perform with the help and guidance of others but cannot yet perform independently." Furthermore, Vygotsky argues that tasks placed within the zone of proximal development

promote maximum cognitive development (Ormrod).²⁸

Jesuit scholars remind us of the *Ratio Studiorum* ("Plan of Studies") of 1599 that began as a global system of Jesuit education. Claude Pavur, S.J. emphasizes its current use: "...it looks to a certain type of energized wisdom that involves a self-cultivation, a broadened and deepened consciousness that has undergone conversion and that can act through affiliation in a community for a universal and transcendent end."²⁹ This "energized wisdom," along with each of the five principles of the IPP are embedded in these learning theories and are the benchmarks that helped define our professional development. Their relationship to Jesuit principles of learning reinforce the understanding that any pursuit of competence and commitment requires a community of learning that is social, reflective and academically sound.

Project Goals and Objectives

We included the following project goals and objectives for our professional development with the Diocese:

- (a) **Goal:** To create a program of interdisciplinary professional development for teachers in the Diocese that is unique to local institutions of higher education and that reflects the values and practices of Jesuit education and the mission of Canisius College.
- Objective:** To develop and implement a one-year pilot program in which literacy instruction is used as one of the several content areas in which professional development occurs through partnering university professors and graduate student apprentices with Diocesan teachers.
- (b) **Goal:** To improve teaching and learning of the participating teachers at a targeted school in the Diocese by providing instruction in their content areas in the form of partnership, mentoring and support, thereby carrying out the mission of the Catholic, Jesuit identity.
- Objective:** (a) To demonstrate positive movement toward improving instructional skills of those who teach underperforming students in reading for information and

understanding and students underperforming abilities in reading for critical analysis, and (b) To identify specific instructional methods and specific areas of teachers' knowledge base that have been added to or altered and are being utilized in classroom instruction as a direct result of this partnership project.

(c) **Goal:** To improve professional attitudes of the targeted Diocesan teachers by providing exciting and refreshing fellowship and mentoring, again reflecting St. Ignatius' desire for people to seek God in all things by serving others.

Objective: To provide open discussion and focused instruction to Diocesan teachers in content and pedagogical knowledge and, thereby strengthen teachers' confidence and identity in their classroom teaching.

(d) **Goal:** To improve the quality of the field experience required of our university's graduate pre-service teachers and thereby carry out the mission of Canisius College by distinguishing our graduate education program by "academic excellence, student-faculty interaction, and a variety of experiential learning opportunities that engage students and transform the mind and spirit."³⁰

Objective: To provide graduate students with one-on-one exposure to classroom teachers engaged in this professional learning initiative by creating and assigning them apprenticeships in which they assist university faculty and diocesan teachers, thereby providing them access to observing and working with young students in literacy instructional settings.

We sought out the Buffalo Diocese where instruction and student achievement are adversely affected by economic and social conditions. The Diocese comprises 53 elementary/intermediate schools (grades K-8) that currently serve 11,582 students across eight counties. Fifty-one schools have students who receive Title I services provided by state governments to ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state assessments (U.S. Department of Education).³¹ This same percentage of students also receives free or reduced priced lunches. The numbers are more striking in those schools

located within the city where almost half are eligible for free/reduced lunch prices.

The challenge of building vibrant, Catholic schools increases in a city that is designated as one of the poorest in the U.S. Charter schools as well as public schools that offer innovative learning programs present viable and often attractive alternatives. Meanwhile, diocesan teachers struggle to keep current with best practices, particularly under the pressure of having to implement the new National Common Core Learning Standards. Quality professional development usually comes at a cost where school budgets are strapped.

The Graduate Apprentice Position

Pre-service teaching candidates enrolled in our graduate education programs at Canisius are required to complete 90 hours of field experience in local middle and high schools prior to their student teaching. Students complete the first 30 hours in the context of a literacy foundations course I teach in the first term of the program. I encourage students to pay close attention to the ways literacy skills are addressed in content learning classrooms. Unfortunately, they too often report seeing little instruction in reading, writing and other areas of literacy, particularly in content classes where learning is the direct result of adolescents' linguistic and verbal competencies.

Our project included "graduate apprentice" positions - an alternative to the standard clinical field requirement and an innovative opportunity for students to engage in instruction and professional learning. Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff report that providing pre-service teachers opportunities to actively engage in classroom settings and work with seasoned teachers are among the characteristics found in teacher education programs that produce higher student achievement gains and greater retention in the first year of teaching.³² As the Holy Father, John Paul II stated in 1979: "The Catholic university or college must train young persons of outstanding knowledge who have made a personal synthesis between faith and culture, who will be capable and willing to assume tasks in the service of the community."³³ We selected three pre-service teachers based on their performance in the

program and their level of maturity and commitment to teacher preparation in general.

The apprentice position served several purposes. First, it allowed participating teachers to be excused from their teaching while the apprentices conducted their classes. This offered an enormous advantage to working with teachers early in the day when they were rested and could focus on our instruction. The graduate apprentices received lesson plans and instruction from the teachers and put into practice the various teaching theories and pedagogical lessons they were studying in our secondary education program. This work demonstrated our college mission of having “graduate and professional programs promote the application of theory to practice.” The graduate apprentices –were also able to observe our sessions with the teachers, giving them a first-hand glance at how professional development works. They successfully completed an online training program in matters of child abuse. This program, the *National Catholic Risk Retention Group’s VIRTUS*, is required of all those who work in close proximity to students in this diocese. They completed this training prior to working in classrooms, and are now able to include it in their curriculum vitae.

An additional advantage to graduate students’ involvement in the project was the participating teachers’ opportunity to interact with young teachers in training. These veteran teachers spoke highly of their exchanges with our pre-service apprentices, citing the opportunity to learn about current pedagogical trends and teaching theories. As one of the participating teachers put it: “I enjoyed the interaction I had with the graduate apprentices, and so did my students. The apprentices were very professional and very capable of handling a middle school classroom.” This position is a first of its kind in our university program and has received strong acknowledgment from our university colleagues. Self-reported data from the three apprentices yield positive learning experiences (Appendix A).

As well, the middle school students with whom our apprentices interacted in class offered rich data that demonstrate their enthusiasm and interest in these younger pre-service teachers. This data appear in the Results section of this paper.

The Instruction

I conducted the project with one university teaching colleague, Adjunct Professor Jack Kenny – a valued member in the departments of English and Graduate Education who recently retired from his high school English teaching position after 35 years of service. Diocesan administrators helped identify a regional elementary/intermediate school in an urban neighborhood where 49% of its students are eligible for free or reduced lunch prices. Since this was a pilot project and we needed a microcosmic look at teachers’ professional lives, we chose to work with two teachers. Our selection of Eleanor and Todd – pseudonyms for our participants - was based on their interest in an instructional model we created for interdisciplinary learning in English Language Arts and Social Studies. They demonstrated an immediate and genuine interest in improving their teaching and students’ learning. Our partnership began with a collaborative examination of data on Diocesan students’ underperforming abilities in literacy skills in grades 5-8. This work led us to our focus - literacy instruction in English and Social Studies at the intermediate level.

We conducted the professional learning in 10 sessions of 2.5 hours during a period of six months – a total of 25 instructional hours. Each session began with a review of lesson plans and instructional support for the graduate apprentices. Our instruction focused on two content areas pertinent to seventh and eighth grade instruction: state test preparation, and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning in English and Social Studies that Eleanor and Todd could use as a model for other interdisciplinary teaching.

These teachers taught us as much about how middle school teachers approach their work as we taught them about innovative instruction. As Todd put it, “The project offered a valuable opportunity for teachers to develop curriculum for immediate classroom instruction.” Pistoe and Maila found that teachers are more likely to change their instructional practices and gain greater subject knowledge and improved teaching skills when their professional development is directly linked to their daily experience, as well as aligned with standards and assessments.³⁴

Results and Analysis

The project's implementation and five outcomes serve us now as a model for future professional development. The outcomes of the project include: (a) The formation of a strong partnership with the Buffalo Diocese that provided the opportunity to carry out parts of our university mission and strategic plan; (b) an implementation model for effective content-specific instruction for neighboring city schools; (c) effective instruction in skills-based learning and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching aligned with the National Common Core Learning Standards. Self-reported data from the teachers demonstrate positive responses to instruction in content-specific teaching skills, the opportunity to collaborate and construct ideas, and observe and collaborate with graduate pre-service teachers (Appendix B); (d) an advanced form of clinical experience for pre-service teachers that addresses our college's strategic goals, and specifically, those goals of our School of Education and Human Services; and (e) positive learning experiences of the seventh and eighth grade students at this low-income school who benefited from the graduate apprentices' instruction.

Although we recognize the limitations of a small sample, the project taught us a great deal about teachers' attitudes towards their work and their roles in professional learning. First, these teachers demonstrate a genuine commitment to professional development. They are determined to participate, even when they face overwhelming responsibilities, and they are driven by the prospects of strengthening their content knowledge. Second, they are very proud of their teaching. They spoke often of their commitment to the Diocese, their school, and most of all, their students. Although they recognize limitations in their teaching, they comfortably acknowledge their strengths. Third, they are very aware of what they need to accomplish in their teaching. This balance of confidence and humility had a significant impact on how quickly and effectively they were able to implement our instruction into their teaching.

Fourth, they are frustrated by administrative oversight. They spoke often about restrictions placed upon them, and the lack of time for

collaboration with teaching colleagues. They view these concerns as administrative responsibilities and expressed frustration with having to confront unrealistic expectations. Lastly, they were actively looking ahead to their next teaching year with respect to the project's instruction; they saw the project as a pilot of their own. Todd offered this endorsement: "I wish every Catholic institution of higher learning would be more pro-active in this kind of work with the Catholic schools. Collaboration between the schools in projects like this one benefits all."

Analysis of Graduate Apprentices and Self-Reported Data

Admittedly, our purpose for the apprentice position was to have them serve as substitute teachers in order to find time for the teachers to participate. As we noted earlier, however, we realized that in addition to working in classrooms, our pre-service teachers learned much from observing our partnership in addition to teaching these middle schools students.

Of one interdisciplinary teaching experience, Melissa offered this observation:

During each English class, it wasn't enough to just have the students read the material and then write responses. We had to teach the students about the concepts they were learning. For example, the students were reading a book about discrimination in the South. Many couldn't relate to the book until I told them that there was a time when women were discriminated against. All of the kids were shocked. They started to compose essays that discussed why they felt discrimination was so terrible and took more value in the lessons from the book.

Of how this opportunity supplemented her regular field experience hours, Rebecca offered this:

Our regular pre-service hours are done under supervision. As a graduate apprentice, I had the opportunity to teach in a classroom without any teachers there to save me. The teachers gave us guidelines for our lessons, but we carried out the lessons ourselves. I had to learn to improvise, manage students, set

rules and differentiate instruction. This opportunity gave me a strong sense of how I will be in my own classroom. I felt more comfortable trying different approaches because I was not afraid of making mistakes.

Rebecca further reflected:

This project gave me a sense of the reality of the teaching profession. I was able to see the real challenges that arise in the profession and witness a team working through solutions. The teachers were able to get valuable professional development time that they are otherwise not exposed to, and the graduate students were able to grow as teacher candidates and explore their unique teaching styles while witnessing teamwork amongst teachers.

Our apprentices also offered self-reported data that reflect some of the strategic plans for the School of Education and Human Services (Appendix C). In response to the School's objective of "dedicating a proportion of field and partnership work to high-need schools and neighborhoods", Rebecca reports:

As a graduate apprentice, I was pleased to work in a high-need school as part of my field experience. I learned about the challenges teachers in these schools face and gained a better understanding of how good teaching can occur under the most difficult circumstances. I spent time in classrooms without the luxury of technology and spacious classrooms. I had to rely on conversation alone among students, something we don't address in our graduate courses.

A second objective we used that came from the Mission – "develop a strong partnership with the Buffalo Public Schools, Buffalo Charter Schools, and the area Catholic schools" – yielded this response from Melissa:

I was able to learn more about the setting and policies of Catholic schools in Buffalo... My next placement is with eighth graders. I have no reservations about going to this middle school because of my work with the teachers and students in this project. This was way

above any of the programs at other graduate schools I looked at. The project eased me and the other graduate students into the next phase of our work and our student teaching.

Rebecca considered Eleanor and Todd's experiences:

"The teachers at this school now have more resources and have established a valuable relationship with Canisius College where they can reach out to professors for future help."

These observations serve us now as testimonies for how closely related this work is to Canisius's mission as stated in many of its published parts. Cited here are two:

Steeped in Jesuit ideals, our undergraduate and graduate academic programs are distinguished by academic excellence, student-faculty interaction, and a variety of experiential learning opportunities that engage students and transform the mind and spirit.

...Benefitting from academically-rich, values-based experience in their interactions with faculty, staff and community, students learn responsible leadership and develop their ability to inspire others to achieve excellence. At Canisius, students practice these leadership skills in the classroom and through co-curricular activities."³⁵

Analysis and Self-Reported Data of the Seventh and Eighth Grade Students

Seventh and eighth grade students' written responses yield positive results of our graduate apprentices' teaching. Of Jillian's science teaching, Emily writes, "I enjoyed the lesson I had with Ms. Parker. She was strict, just like teachers should be. She got out what she was trying to say in an understanding manner. She did what she was asked to do and was very smart in her knowledge of Science. Science is a fun class!"

Tony writes:

Ms. Letchworth was very good at teaching our class. She kept our class under control, answered our questions, and was really nice to

us. There really wasn't anything bad about her, except she had some trouble with velocity but we helped her. All in all I feel that she is a very great teacher."

And of Rebecca's teaching and involvement in the Project:

"Ms. Lyons is a very good teacher! When we are with her she explains things well and I know exactly what to do. I enjoy having her here. Today we talked about discrimination and stereotypes. She talked with us about our thoughts and our feelings and I can't wait to have her back again! I am glad they picked our school to do this program. It is an honor to have her here!"

There was also opportunity for the eighth graders to ask the graduate apprentices about high school. Both these students and our apprentices learned from one another in this context.

The Role of Mission

Responses to this project from some of our Jesuit faculty affirms its contribution to our institution's mission of embracing issues and challenges in our urban routes. They cite the following outcomes of the project and their connection to the College's mission: (a) reaching out to an underserved area of our city; (b) integrating the College into a Catholic school in its neighboring city where the majority of its students are economically poor. As one Jesuit articulates, "The physical placement of a Jesuit institution is, in and of itself, a very testament to its Jesuit ideals."; (c) addressing the Jesuit ideal of *magis* throughout, as it was designed to help improve the quality of education for both the participating teachers and Canisius's graduate pre-service candidates, and (d) initiating justice for the poor. Says another Jesuit teaching colleague, "This kind of work contributes to assuring that Canisius graduates will become important leaders in their community, remembering and embracing the Jesuit ideals."

Canisius College President, John J. Hurley acknowledges not only the Jesuit ideals in projects that offer help to our neediest neighbors, but the College's Catholic identity. Referencing a slogan, "We are Catholic, let it show," he stresses Catholic

education as a significant part of our students' academic and social experiences. "When Canisius stays firm in its Catholic, Jesuit identity, its mission is influenced by such ideals." He also underscores that students, faculty and staff do not have to be practicing Catholics in order to participate in the College's mission. "The ideals influenced by Canisius's Catholic identity awaken in its community members a commitment to social justice."

We end here with an account from Jess, our contributing undergraduate researcher/writer who offers her perspectives of the presence of Canisius's Jesuit mission:

This project has taught me much about the role of Jesuit education and mission in my studies. As a secondary English education student at Canisius College, I have the advantage of seeing explicitly how aspects of Jesuit education and Canisius's mission and identity play out in my role as a student. In addition to the major course requirements in the Secondary education department, I have taken courses from our core curriculum that embodies aspects of the Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm (IPP). In these courses, I can identify the five points of the Paradigm and see how I am truly receiving a Jesuit education.

First, each class I have taken gives a "human context" or is student focused. The experiences I've had in several of classes, which have included service learning projects and other campus service activities, challenge students to reflect on the content of the courses as they are situated in our lives. Such experiences and reflection leave an impression on students that can regularly enable us to live out what we have learned. Our core curriculum also helps develop analytical skills that allow us to evaluate our own lives and the world around us.

For instance, after taking a philosophy course called "Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud," I now have a much deeper understanding of broad topics such as the purpose of life and the meaning of true happiness. Understanding and studying such topics required me to develop a stronger sense of analytical skills

required for self-evaluation. The depth of this understanding is something I don't think I would have developed without the elements of the mission at Canisius as they were played out in these classes.

This kind of growth, as I've learned them in the IPP - knowledge and reflection/evaluation - is how the mission and identity of Canisius College is continually carried forth. The values and ideals of the IPP in Jesuit education, which are embedded in all of Canisius's educational pursuits, leave students forever changed and inspire us to engage in worldly events. From my own experiences, I have come to realize how much knowledge I've gained and how much more metacognitive I really am. I think more deeply about global issues and realize my own calling to engage with and change the world.

After taking a religious studies seminar called "Women, Gender, and Religion," I became much more aware of the degree of sexism and other overwhelming challenges with gender issues women of many major faiths (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, even the Goddess movement) experience. I now think more deeply and am more sensitive about women's treatment in social and religious settings, in both first world and third world countries. This course taught me to look at women's issues outside my own "American" perspective and to consider the challenges of sexism and gender I never knew existed in a global context. In this way, Canisius has influenced me and enlightened me to the reality that I will always do my best to carry out its mission and identity.

It is very clear to me that offering professional development to underserved schools in the Buffalo Diocese is directly aligned with Canisius's mission. As a Jesuit institution, Canisius actively identifies and engages in its own urban community. As one of the poorest cities in the United States, Buffalo and its schools need professional development resources such as this project in order to stay current in the field and offer their students an optimal education. I am excited to be a part of this research and

outreach, especially since it has made me realize how much my Jesuit education has influenced me and will continue to be a force in my life long after I leave Canisius. HJE

Acknowledgments

My gratitude and appreciation to the following: the participating teachers who embraced this project and were willing to explore their teaching skills and values with us and who taught us a great deal about their work; Adjunct Professor Jack F. Kenny, who worked with me from the earliest stages of the project and who offered outstanding instruction to both our participating teachers and graduate apprentices; Melissa LaMastra (MA, '12), Jillian Manchester (MA, '12) and Rebecca Yochum, (MA, '12), our graduate apprentices who embraced the project, taught so effectively and were willing to explore an alternative clinical teaching experience; Jess Wright, my undergraduate researcher and contributing writer, for her excellent communication skills and sophistication throughout the interviews she conducted; Steven Szymkowiak, our graduate research assistant who provided outstanding research, writing and stylistic contributions; Canisius College President John J. Hurley and my Canisius Jesuit teaching colleagues, Rev. Daniel P. Jamros, S.J., Rev. Patrick J. Lynch, S.J., and Professor Bridget Keegan of Creighton University, each of whom contributed their views to this project and its relationship to mission; members of the Diocese of Buffalo who embraced my outreach and guided us through the early stages of our work; Professor Julie J. Henry and SEHS Dean, Michael J. Pardales who supported Jessica's work; Rev. Michael F. Tunney, S.J., Director of Mission and Identity, who not only awarded me an inaugural Research/Publication/Performance Fellowship, but who offered ongoing support throughout my writing; and Professor E. Roger Stephenson, my husband and valued editor.

Notes

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Appendix A

An Immersion Initiative of College Professors, Graduate Students and Diocesan Teachers in Partnership

Graduate Apprentices

This is a data protocol that will serve to illustrate some outcomes of the pilot project and your participation in it. Please offer your prose responses to each question in as much detail as you can.

Please type your responses, using 12-point and bold, directly under each question below here and then send this on as a Word attachment.

1. In as much detail as you can recall, describe your understanding of the purpose of the professional development project.
2. In as much detail as you can offer, describe your understanding of your participation as “graduate apprentice” in the year-one pilot project. What did you do, how did you serve the project, etc.
3. Specifically, what did you learn from this project? Consider the two contexts, one at a time – the classroom instruction and your observations of the teacher team.
4. What did this project do to add to your professional growth as a preservice teacher? Be as specific as you can.
5. Do you have any other responses to your participation

Appendix B

An Immersion Initiative of Professors, Graduate Students and Diocesan Teachers in Partnership:

Outcomes Report

1. Before responding specifically to your experience with this project, please offer your insight into professional development for teachers in general.
2. What has been your understanding of the purpose of this Professional Development project as it was presented to you in the first session?
3. Can you cite any adjustments to your teaching as a direct result of your participation in this project?
4. If you were to continue participating in a professional development initiative, what instructional areas would you prefer to examine?
5. For the continuation of this kind of professional development, what suggestions can you offer that would improve on the experience you had this year? Provide both the good, the bad and the ugly.
 - a. The amount of time spent with project faculty:
 - b. The substance of instruction/mentoring:
 - c. The ways meetings were facilitated:
 - d. Graduate apprentices' roles:

Appendix C

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES Strategic Plan 2012-2016

Develop Mission-centric programs in Professional Education

SEHS OBJECTIVE 8.2: Recruit and support a strong, diverse faculty and staff who are committed to the mission of the College.

SEHS OBJECTIVE 8.3: Expand existing undergraduate and graduate professional programs.

SEHS OBJECTIVE 8.4: Expand collaborations with local and regional partners.

II. Living our Catholic Jesuit Mission

Become a Leading Advocate for the Poorest and Those who Suffer Economic, Social, Cultural or Religious Injustice.

SEHS GOAL 9: Enhance established programs with mission-centric initiatives

SEHS OBJECTIVE 9.1: Document, track, evaluate and expand the social justice activities of SEHS programs.

SEHS OBJECTIVE 9.2: Dedicate a proportion of field and partnership work to high-need schools and neighborhoods.

SEHS OBJECTIVE 9.3: Bring SEHS resources to bear in high-needs areas in the Buffalo-Niagara region.

Recruit and Support a Strong, Diverse Faculty and Staff who are Committed to the Mission of the University.

SEHS GOAL 5: Expand Faculty development opportunities

SEHS OBJECTIVE 5.1: Strengthen faculty development opportunities leading to tenure and promotion

SEHS OBJECTIVE 5.2: Increase support for SEHS faculty research endeavors, including collaborative research with students

SEHS OBJECTIVE 5.3: Improve communication to and inclusion of adjunct faculty members.

Develop Mission-centric programs in Professional Education

II. Living our Catholic Jesuit Mission

Become a Leading Advocate for the Poorest and Those who Suffer Economic, Social, Cultural or Religious Injustice.

SEHS GOAL 9: Enhance established programs with mission-centric initiatives

SEHS OBJECTIVE 9.1: Document, track, evaluate and expand the social justice activities of SEHS programs.

SEHS OBJECTIVE 9.2: Dedicate a proportion of field and partnership work to high-need schools and neighborhoods.

SEHS OBJECTIVE 9.3: Bring SEHS resources to bear in high-needs areas in the Buffalo-Niagara region.

Expand Collaboration with Local and Regional Partners

SEHS GOAL 12: Document, track and evaluate SEHS partnerships and cooperative agreements to enhance our positive impact.

SEHS OBJECTIVE 12.1: Create and implement a strategy for the sustainable continuation of SEHS partnerships and cooperative agreements.

SEHS OBJECTIVE 12.2: Develop a strong partnership with the Buffalo Public Schools, Buffalo Charter Schools, and the area Catholic schools.